An Investigation of Autonomous Learning Self-efficacy: A Case Study of GFP Learners at the University of Buraimi

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Abstract

The 21st-century education has been shifted from teacher-centered to different types of learning such as autonomous learning. The current quantitative research aims to investigate Omani GFP (General Foundation Program) learners' self-efficacy based on the autonomous learning aspects and their sub-aspects. It aims to answer two questions: what is the University of Buraimi GFP learners' self-efficacy in the autonomous learning aspects? And what is the University of Buraimi GFP learners' self-efficacy in the autonomous learning sub-aspects? This research is significant as there is not a research study in literature, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, which investigates learners' self-efficacy in autonomous learning. 110 students participated in the current study for the academic year 2021/2022. They were selected using a convenience sampling procedure. One electronic questionnaire was employed to collect data. SPSS software (version 23) was used to analyze data. The results show that Omani GFP learners' self-efficacy in delivering is higher than their self-efficacy in identifying learning goals, monitoring, evaluating, and developing or designing materials and resources respectively. The results further show that GFP learners' self-efficacy is high in some sub-aspects of the autonomous learning aspects rather than the others. The results' implications and future research avenues are discussed.

Keywords: autonomous learning, autonomous learning aspects, GFP (General Foundation Program), self-efficacy

1. Introduction

21st-century education has been shifted from exam-oriented and teacher-centered to student-centered education. It is directed to different types of learning and one of them is autonomous learning. Autonomous learning is traced back to Holec and he (1980, as cited in Nunan, 1996) defined it as "the ability to take charge of one's own learning" (p.3). However, Little (1990, as cited in Tuan, 2021) defined autonomous learning as "the capacity-for detachment, official reflection, decision-making, and independent action" (p.4).

Autonomous learning is an approach that aims to promote lifelong learning. It emphasizes that learners have to have a role in the learning process. They have to work with their teachers to identify the learning contents, objectives, learning methods, learning techniques and assessment tools (Van Nguyen & Habok, 2021). Gürses (2020) stated that autonomous learning depends on many factors: motivation, beliefs, learner's sense of him/herself and metacognitive knowledge, the knowledge of how to think critically, manage a process of learning and reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of the learning process (Van Nguyen & Habok, 2021).

The research of learner autonomy is affected by learners, setting, and contextual factors. Consequently, there is a need of investigating autonomous learning in different contexts to gain more insight into it (Gürses, 2020). In the Omani context, Saeed (2021) has stated that the Ministry of Higher Education currently emphasizes the lifelong learning and study skills of students who are studying in the institutions of higher education. According to him (2021), Chikwa, Al Damen & Mathew (2018), and AlMasroori (2012), although there are many attempts of helping Omani learners to be active learners and take the authority of their learning, Omani learners are mostly dependent on their teachers in understanding or completing most of the required learning tasks or projects. Students are least bothered or responsible for their learning (Saeed, 2021; Chikwa, Al Damen & Mathew, 2018; and

AlMasroori, 2012). In literature, there are research studies that investigated autonomous learning in Oman focusing on the perspectives of teachers and students of autonomous learning, frameworks that enhance the application of autonomous learning and the autonomous strategies that students prefer. However, there are few studies that investigated the reasons for preferring students spoon-feeding learning. Based on the experience of the researcher, the learners' self-efficacy, one's beliefs of his/ her capabilities to organize and accomplish a task, could be one of the reasons. Mahyuddin, Elias, Cheong, Muhamadm, Noordin and Abdullah (2006) stated that the beliefs that people hold about their abilities and the outcome of their efforts influence their behaviors. Students with high levels of self-efficacy beliefs take more responsibility for their learning and see themselves as proactive students (Kim, Wang, Ahn & Bong, 2015).

Therefore, the motivation of the current research is to investigate the University of Buraimi GFP (General Foundation Program) learners' self-efficacy of the autonomous learning aspects and their sub-aspects. It aims to reduce the dearth of studies that investigate the learners' self-efficacy of autonomous learning, specifically in Oman, and to present a new insight that could enhance autonomous learning application. The current research will answer two questions: What is the University of Buraimi GFP learners' self-efficacy of the autonomous learning aspects? and what is the University of Buraimi GFP learners' self-efficacy of the autonomous learning sub-aspects? The autonomous learning aspects that the current research focuses on are identifying learning goals and needs, designing or developing learning materials, delivering, monitoring, and evaluating. In contrast, the sub-aspects of the autonomous learning aspects that the current research focuses on are identifying needs and skills, setting goals and objectives, designing or developing materials, evaluating the materials, presenting presentations in English, working in a group, controlling time and situations, asking questions in English, identifying strengths and weaknesses, giving feedback, make decisions, evaluating learning, reflecting an experience, theorizing a theory for improvement and testing the theorized theory. The researcher expects that Omani GFP learners have low self-efficacy of autonomous learning aspects and sub-aspects specifically in delivering and reflecting the learning experiences.

The current paper is divided into four sections. It will respectively start by presenting the literature review of the autonomous learning self-efficacy, the research methodology that is followed to investigate it, and the results that were found, and it will be ended with a discussion of the results.

2. Literature review
2.1. Definitions

Although there are many attempts of helping Omani learners to be active learners and take authority of their learning, Omani learners are mostly dependent on their teachers. Students are least bothered or responsible for their learning. They are not autonomous. In literature, most research studies focused on the teachers' and learners' perspectives of autonomous learning, frameworks that could activate autonomous learning effectively in various contexts, some strategies and techniques that could increase learners' autonomy and how to develop students' autonomy in learning some skills of English. The motivation of the current research is to investigate Omani GFP students' self-efficacy of the autonomous learning aspects and sub-aspects as being self-efficacy one factor of learners' autonomy.

As stated earlier, the concept of autonomous learning appeared in the early 1980s and the essence definition of it was by Holec. Holec (1980, as cited in Nunan, 1996) defined autonomous learning as "the ability to take charge of one's own learning" (p.3). Similarly, Bergen (1990, as cited in AlMasroori, 2012) asserts that autonomous learning is "the readiness to take the charge of one's own learning in the service one's needs and purposes" (p.102).

In contrast, the crux definition of self-efficacy was by Bandura. He in 1977 defined self-efficacy as "a person's beliefs of his/ her capabilities to organize and accomplish actions that are required to achieve specific attainments" (Bandura, 1997, p.3). In addition, self-efficacy was defined as" a personal belief of one's capability to perform an action or achieve a goal in an effective and appropriate manner" (Ormrod, 2006 as cited in Bhullar, 2019, p. 58). The current study is based on Holec's definition of autonomous learning and Bandura's definition of self-efficacy.

2.1.1. Autonomous learning and self-efficacy: theoretical underpinnings
2.1.1.1. Autonomous learning

Autonomous Learning is related to Experimental Learning Theory. This theory was founded by Kolb in 1984. It presented a foundation of an approach that states that learning is a lifelong process. It emphasized the importance of combining students' prior knowledge with the new one. It emphasized the significance of giving students a chance of reflecting on their learning experiences and connecting their reading to the theoretical aspects of their courses (Healey & Jenkins, 2000). Experimental learning theory presented a model which describes learning cycle. It stated that there are four stages of learning called concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. The concrete experience is a stage where learners experience an activity. Reflective observation is a stage where learners try to reflect on the experience that they have had. The abstract conceptualization is a stage where learners try to conceptualize a theory or model of what they have observed. However, active experimentation is a stage where learners test the model or theory that they have conceptualized in stage three. In other words, this theory focused on the idea that learning takes place through experiencing, reflecting, thinking and acting (McCarthy, 2010).

2.1.1.2. Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy is a concept in Social Cognitive Theory (SCT). This theory was advanced by Albert Bandura in 1977. It focused on the notion that learning and behavior take place by a learner's observation and interaction with the social environment (Merriam & Bierema, 2015). This theory outlined seven central concepts called enactive learning, vicarious learning, self-regulation, modelling, observational learning as a function of modelling, self-efficacy and outcome expectations. Enactive learning is learning by doing. Nevertheless, vicarious learning is the learning that takes place without an overt performance. It is the learning that takes place by observing others. Observation helps people to gain a good collection of knowledge, skills, rules and beliefs (Schunk, 2012). As for self-regulation, the social cognitive theory assumes that people tend to control the events that affect their lives. They tend to have personal agency in their actions. Self-regulation includes self-observation (self-monitoring), self-judgment and self-reaction. Modelling is another crucial concept in social cognitive theory. Bandura, according to Schunk (2012), stated that modelling focuses on the idea that the person's cognitive, affective or behavioral changes take place when a person observes a model, such as a parent, a teacher or one of the celebrities. Observational learning is one function of modelling. The prime two factors that affect observational learning are self-efficacy and outcome expectations. Self-efficacy was defined as one's personal beliefs of his/ her capabilities to learn or perform an action (Bandura, 1997). Its advantage is that it promotes a sense of agency in a person's life. It is important because it affects the activity chosen, expenditure effort, persistence, and learning. It is different from the outcome expectations. Outcome expectations are one's beliefs about the action that will happen in the future (Schunk, 2012).

2.2. Past studies: a review
2.2.1. Overseas research studies

Mahendra (2021) has performed mixed-method research on thirty students to investigate learners' capacity of autonomous learning specifically in the breakout of covid-19. The research instruments were a questionnaire and an interview. Results showed that the research participants had the capacity of autonomous learning to some extent. Results showed that learners were autonomous learners in defining content and progression, monitoring the procedure of acquiring knowledge, and doing self-evaluation. They further showed that the aspects of setting objectives and selecting suitable needs should be enhanced.

On the other hand, Tham (2021) has conducted mixed-method research to investigate English majors' perceptions of autonomous learning skills and whether or not they affect participants' writing skills specifically after using an e-portfolio as a learning tool. The study was done on thirty-five participants who had different majors. Tests, writing logs and interviews were the main research instruments. Results showed that there was an improvement in learners' writing skills. Results also showed that students had positive attitudes toward the skills of autonomous learning, including setting goals, choosing learning materials, creating a study plan, writing reflections and conducting peer assessments.

Marantika (2021) has conducted quantitative research on thirty students to analyze the relationship between metacognitive ability and learning autonomy as a strategy to enhance the outcomes of learning. Results showed that there was a significant relationship between a learner's metacognitive ability, autonomy and learning outcomes. Results showed that Indonesian students had the enthusiasm to raise their learning capacity. In addition, results showed that they wanted to develop their learning strategies and had the opportunities to make decisions specifically in ideas development.

Marsevani (2021) has performed mixed-method research to examine learners' views of an instructor's teaching objectives and requirements, specifically objectives setting, and study plans and their practices of learning English autonomously. A questionnaire and an interview were the main research instruments. Results showed that learners had positive attitudes toward autonomous learning specifically the instructors' objectives and the requirements of learning English autonomously.

2.2.2. In the Omani context

In the Omani context, Saeed (2021) has conducted mixed-method research on 135 EFL learners to identify learners' perceptions of autonomous learning in an EFL context and their beliefs of the role of teachers, peers and social media in achieving autonomy in learning. Results revealed that students had the awareness of the autonomous learner concept. They believed that teachers, peers and social media do not merely help them to foster their autonomy but to gain confidence, self-esteem, motivation, self-determination, and a sense of responsibility in the environment of EFL language learning.

On the other hand, Chikwa, Al Damen and Mathew (2018) have performed a quantitative study on 173 students to explore the extent to which EFL students on a foundation program at a private university college inclined to learner autonomy. Results of a survey showed that students had a low level of autonomy and a little inclination toward developing themselves as autonomous learners. They excessively depended on their teachers in their learning of a language.

In contrast, Alkhoudary (2015) has conducted experimental research of autonomous learning on sixty students using a mixed-method research design to evaluate the autonomous learning importance. Results showed that autonomous learning motivates learners to learn independently, and it increases their intrinsic motivation more than extrinsic one. In addition, results showed that autonomous learning increases students' language skills.

Therefore, teachers can depend on this approach to help their students to increase their motivation, monitor their progress, and improve their behaviors.

AlMasroori (2012) has conducted mixed-method research to examine teachers' and learners' perceptions and beliefs of autonomous learning. Results showed that there were differences in the teachers' and students' perceptions and beliefs toward specific aspects of autonomous learning. They were independent in some aspects and they were not on others.

As it is clear from the previous review of literature, many research studies were done on a small number of participants. Many research studies' results contradict each other. This point could indicate that this area of research needs more investigation, and the research context plays a role in understanding autonomous learning from various perspectives. In addition, after reviewing the previous research studies, it was obvious that most of the previous research studies emphasized teachers' and learners' perceptions or attitudes of autonomous learning, its definitions, its strategies, and its relationships with other variables or how to apply it. However, there is not a research study, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, that investigates learners' self-efficacy of autonomous learning. Therefore, this research will fill this lacuna and will try to investigate the University of Buraimi GFP Learners' self-efficacy of the autonomous learning aspects, including identifying the learning goals and needs, designing or developing the learning materials, delivering, monitoring, and evaluating, and their sub-aspects.

3.   Research methodology
3.1. Research design and context

The current quantitative research aims to collect numeric data of GFP learners' self-efficacy of autonomous learning aspects at the University of Buraimi. The data is primary. The researcher collects it by using an electronic questionnaire. The present research was performed in the academic year 2021/ 2022. It is done during the breakout of covid-19, a disease that has been spreading around the world since the end of the year 2019. It was done on the General Foundation Program (GFP) learners of the University of Buraimi in Oman. General Foundation Program is a program that is designed to prepare high school graduates for their specializations. It aims to develop students' skills of English, math, computing and study skills. General Foundation Program includes three levels that students have to pass before starting their specializations. The teaching process at the university is based on giving the students the authority of their learning. Due to the breakout of covid-19, the remote and face-to-face modes of learning were activated. The study participants were between the age of (18- 20), (21- 22) or (+23). They shaped 71.3%, 22.6% and 6.1% respectively. They graduated from schools that followed teacher-centered approach. They studied courses that were designed by the Ministry of Education in Oman.

3.2. Participants and sampling

The general foundation program at the University of Buraimi includes 425 students (males: 99, females: 326). A total of 110 students participated in the current study. The male participants comprised 15.7% ($N= 18$) of the sample while the female participants shaped 84.3 % ($N= 97$) of the sample. The participants who were in level one were 27.7% ($N= 32$: $T= 37$). However, the participants who were in levels two and three were 41.7% ($N= 48$: $T= 227$) and 30.5% ($N= 34$: $T=161$) respectively. Study participants were chosen by utilizing the convenience sampling procedure. This type of sampling was used because the research had fewer rules to follow. Participants had merely to be students in GFP. The researcher used it because there was a need to find a readily available sample to do the research.

The process of selecting the participants started by sending WhatsApp texts and email invitations to the targeted sample. They were written by the researcher herself. Being the learning modes at the university remote and face-to-face, WhatsApp groups were

established by every instructor for further guidance of all students who were enrolled in every course in GFP. The researcher used them and e-mail invitations because that way was the best way to make sure that the responses which will be received will be from the targeted population (for more information, see data collection section).

3.2. Research instrument

To collect data of the current study, one electronic questionnaire was employed. The electronic questionnaire consists of two sections. The first one aimed to collect the demographic information of the study participants especially their gender, age, and the current academic level in GFP. The second section, however, aimed to collect data on the learners' self-efficacy of the autonomous learning aspects, including identifying learning goals and needs, designing or developing the learning materials, delivering, monitoring, and evaluating, and their sub-aspects.

Self-efficacy of autonomous learning questionnaire was designed by the researcher herself. To design it, the researcher tries to read the literature of the topic in general and the area that the research investigates. After understanding the area of the research, the researcher designs the research instrument, a questionnaire, with the help of two other questionnaires which were done by Tschannen-Moran and Hoy in 2001 to measure the teacher self-efficacy and Ruelens in 2019 to measure the self-efficacy of language learning strategies.

The current research 25-item instrument consists of a 5-point likers scale (1= not at all, 2= maybe a little, 3= moderately, 4= a lot to some extent, 5= a lot). It includes five subscales: identifying learning goals and needs, designing or developing learning materials and resources, delivering, monitoring and evaluating. The first subscale, identifying learning goals and needs, aims to measure the participants' self-efficacy in identifying their needs, goals and skills. The second subscale aims to measure the participants' self-efficacy in preparing materials or choosing the available ones. However, the third subscale, delivering, aims to gauge the participants' self-efficacy in presenting what they have learned to others. The fourth subscale, monitoring, measures the participants' self-efficacy of monitoring their learning by identifying the mistakes and giving feedback, for example. In contrast, the fifth subscale, evaluation, aims to measure the participants' self-efficacy of evaluating what they have achieved identifying the future steps that could enhance their progress and testing them. Items one and two of identifying learning goals and needs subscale and item three of designing or developing learning materials and resources subscale (see appendix1) were inspired from Ruelens' questionnaire which was designed and validated in 2019. However, items four and five of delivering, item seven of monitoring and one of evaluation (see appendix1) were taken from Tschannen-Moran and Hoy scale which was validated in 2001.

To measure the feasibility of the study's instrument, a pilot study was performed. The pilot study was done in the academic year 2021/ 2022. It includes 55 participants. Females shaped 89.5% while males comprised 10.5%. The participants were students at the University of Buraimi. To measure the validity and reliability SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science software (version 23) was used. To ensure validity, the Pearson correlation coefficient was used. Results showed that the correlation of the instrument items is highly significant (less than 0.05). However, to ensure reliability, Cronbach's alpha was utilized (see table1).

Table 1

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.932	25

Table 1 shows that the reliability coefficient of the instrument was .932. This indicates that the reliability of the instrument was excellent. Moreover, to make sure of the reliability of the data, in designing the electronic questionnaire, the researcher made sure that each participant has merely one opportunity to respond to it. The researcher also informed the participants of the questionnaire's purpose.

3.3. Data collection

To collect data, the researcher started reading the literature to understand the topic and find the available instruments that could measure the area of the research. After understanding the topic, the questionnaire was designed. After gaining the ethical approval of conducting the research and making sure of the research instrument's feasibility, validity and reliability by conducting a pilot study, the instrument was distributed. Email invitations and WhatsApp texts were written by the researcher herself and they were sent to the study participants. As an illustration, the emails included the research topic, research objective to attain the research credibility. Moreover, they included the invitation of the study participating, and the main research ethical considerations. The participants were informed that they have the complete freedom to participate in the study or not and the data that will be collected will not be used only for research purposes. Furthermore, participants were informed of their participation's anonymity and responses' confidentiality. After receiving the responses, the data is saved in Excel format. A total of 115 participants participated in the study. 110 of the questionnaires were taken for the research investigation. Five questionnaires were discarded because of the sloppy completion.

4. Results

The current research data were analyzed by SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) Software (version 23). The descriptive statistics were utilized to analyze data finding the mean (M) and Standard Deviation (SD), minimum and maximum. This step was done to answer the research two questions: what is the University of Buraimi GFP learners' self-efficacy of the autonomous learning aspects? and what is the University of Buraimi GFP learners' self-efficacy of the autonomous learning sub-aspects?

4.1. Descriptive statistics
4.1.1. Question one: what is the University of Buraimi GFP learners' self-efficacy of the autonomous learning aspects?

The calculations of minimum, maximum, mean, and standard deviation of the total autonomous learning aspects were presented in table 2.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics of the Total Autonomous Learning Aspects

		Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Identifying learning goals and needs	10	6.00	30.00	20.045	4.58835
Designing or developing learning materials and resources	10	3.00	15.00	10.727	2.74249
Learning delivering	10	10.00	34.00	22.163	4.68558
Monitoring	10	8.00	25.00	15.754	3.64273
Evaluation	10	5.00	20.00	13.109	3.10769
Valid N (listwise)	10				

Table 2 shows that GFP learners' self-efficacy in delivering (M= 22.1) and identifying learning goals (M= 20) respectively are higher than their self-efficacy in monitoring (M= 15.7), evaluation (M= 13.1) and designing or developing learning materials and recourses (M= 10.7). Results showed that the distribution of the responses of learning delivering as an aspect of autonomous learning (SD= 4.6) is higher than the distribution of the responses of identifying learning goals (SD= 4.5), monitoring (SD= 3.6), evaluating (SD= 3.1) or developing learning materials and recourses (SD= 2.7).

4.1.2. Question two: what is the University of Buraimi GFP learners' self-efficacy of the autonomous learning sub-aspects?
4.1.2.1. Descriptive statistics of identifying learning goals and needs sub-aspects

The calculations of minimum, maximum, mean, and standard deviation of the sub-aspects of identifying learning goals and needs aspect were presented in table 3.

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics of Identifying Goals and Needs Sub-aspects

		Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I can identify what I need to learn.	110	1.00	5.00	3.245	.98787
I can identify the skills that I need to learn.	110	1.00	5.00	3.454	1.01941
I can set goals of what I want to learn.	110	1.00	5.00	3.490	.97440
I can divide the goals into small objectives.	110	1.00	5.00	3.190	1.01814
I can set goals of a course that I am studying.	110	1.00	5.00	3.281	1.10156
I can set a plan to achieve the goals of the course that I am studying.	110	1.00	5.00	3.381	1.11686
Valid N (listwise)	110				

Table 3 shows that GFP learners' self-efficacy in setting goals of what they want to learn (M= 3.49) and the skills that they need to learn (M= 3.45) respectively are higher than their self-efficacy of setting a plan to achieve the goals of the course that they learn (M= 3.38), setting goals of a course that they study (M= 3.28), identifying what they need to learn (M= 3.2) or dividing the goals into small objectives (M= 3.19).

4.1.2.2. Descriptive statistics of designing or developing learning materials and resources sub-aspects

The calculations of minimum, maximum, mean, and standard deviation of the sub-aspects of designing or developing learning materials and resources aspect were presented in table 4.

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics of Designing or Developing Learning Materials and Resources Sub-aspects

		Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I can choose the suitable materials of the lesson that I am going to teach from the Internet.	110	1.00	5.00	3.6364	1.02023
I can prepare the materials and resources e.g. PowerPoint presentations pictures worksheets or video clips that I need to teach my classmates by myself.	110	1.00	5.00	3.5091	1.17110
I can choose the materials that are relevant to my lesson.	110	1.00	5.00	3.5818	1.04383
Valid N (listwise)	110				

Table 4 shows that GFP learners' self-efficacy in choosing the suitable materials of the lesson that they are going to teach from the Internet (M= 3.6) and choosing the materials that are relevant to their lesson (M= 3.5) respectively are higher than students' self-efficacy in preparing the materials and resources that they need to teach something to their classmates by themselves.

4.1.2.3. Descriptive statistics of learning delivering sub-aspects

The calculations of minimum, maximum, mean, and standard deviation of learning delivering sub-aspects were presented in table 5.

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics of Learning Delivering Sub-aspects

		Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I can present a presentation to my classmates in English.	10	1.00	5.00	3.0818	1.09320
I can work in a group to achieve an objective.	10	1.00	5.00	3.7818	1.00806
I can run the activities of the lesson that I am going to teach with my classmates smoothly.	10	1.00	5.00	3.3455	.97149
I can get my classmates to follow the rules of the classroom.	10	1.00	5.00	2.9000	1.04881
I can control my classmates' disruptive behaviors.	10	1.00	5.00	2.7909	1.10955
I can divide the time of the class on the prime a lesson's objectives.	10	1.00	5.00	3.1091	.93205
I can ask others questions in English.	10	1.00	5.00	3.1545	1.07675
Valid N (listwise)	10				

Table 5 shows that GFP learners' self-efficacy in working in a group to achieve an objective (M= 3.7) is higher than running activities of a lesson smoothly with their classmates (M= 3.34), asking questions in English (M= 3.15), dividing the time of a class on

the prime a lesson's objectives (M= 3.1), presenting a presentation to their classmates in English (M= 3), getting their classmates to follow the rules of the classroom (M= 2.9), or controlling their classmates' disruptive behaviors (M= 2.79) respectively.

4.1.2.4. Descriptive statistics of monitoring sub-aspects

The calculations of minimum, maximum, mean, and standard deviation of learning monitoring sub-aspects were presented in table 6.

Table 6

Descriptive Statistics of Monitoring Sub-aspects

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I can give alternative explanations if my classmates feel confused.	110	1.00	5.00	3.1545	1.11031
I can decide whether my classmates understand what I have explained or not.	110	1.00	5.00	3.2455	.95000
I can decide my classmates' strengths and weakness after answering a task.	110	1.00	5.00	2.9727	.96221
I can give feedback on my classmates' answers.	110	1.00	5.00	2.9909	.99074
I can take the right decision of a problem.	110	1.00	5.00	3.3909	.88924

Table 6 shows that GFP learners' self-efficacy in taking the right decision of a problem (M= 3.3) is higher than their self-efficacy of deciding whether their classmates understand what has been explained or not (M= 3.2), giving alternative explanations if their classmates feel confused (M=3.15), giving feedback on their classmates' answers (M= 2.99), or deciding their classmates' strengths and weaknesses after answering a task (M= 2.97) respectively.

4.1.2.5. Descriptive statistics of evaluation sub-aspects

The calculations of minimum, maximum, mean, and standard deviation of learning evaluation sub-aspects were presented in table 7.

Table 7
Descriptive Statistics of Evaluation Sub-aspects

		Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I can use a variety of assessment strategies e.g., quizzes games or discussions to make sure whether my classmates understand what I have explained or not.	10	1.00	5.00	3.2545	1.07034
I can evaluate the lesson that I have explained to my classmates identifying its strengths and weaknesses.	10	1.00	5.00	3.1455	.91708
I can find a better way of teaching my lesson if I am going to teach it again for my classmates in the future.	10	1.00	5.00	3.4091	1.08616
I can test the new way of teaching a lesson to see whether it is good or not.	10	1.00	5.00	3.3000	.92419
Valid N (listwise)	10				

Table 7 shows that GFP learners' self-efficacy in finding a better way of teaching a lesson again in the future (M= 3.4) is higher than their self-efficacy in testing a new way of teaching a lesson to see whether it is good or not (M= 3.3), using a variety of assessment strategies to make sure whether their classmates understand what they have explained (M= 3.25), or evaluating a lesson that has been explained to their classmates identifying its strengths and weaknesses (M= 3.1) respectively.

5.   Discussion

The current research results show that GFP learners' self-efficacy in delivering is higher than their self-efficacy in identifying learning goals, monitoring, evaluating and designing or developing learning materials and resources respectively. This result suggests that Omani learners are dependent. It suggests that GFP learners can apply what others ask them to do. This result could also suggest that GFP learners have the desire to experience things and learn but not to reflect, think or act. This result could further imply that Omani learners have the main factor of self-efficacy, interaction with the environment. This result is in accordance with Chikwa, Al Damen and Mathew (2018) who found that Omani learners are dependent. In addition, it is in the same line with AlMasroori (2012) who found that Omani learners are autonomous in some aspects and they are not in others.

As for learning goals and needs sub-aspects, results show that GFP learners' self-efficacy in setting goals of what they want to learn and the skills that they need to learn respectively are higher than their self-efficacy in setting a plan to achieve the goals of the course that they learn, setting goals of a course that they study, identifying what they need to learn or dividing the goals into small objectives. This result could imply that Omani learners have self-awareness, but they do not have the higher thinking skills to analyze a course. They are unable to apply, analyze, synthesize and evaluate. This result could support the idea that autonomous learning is a process of learning where learners have the authority of their learning but with a teacher's guidance. In addition, this result could imply that Omani students have the prime factor of observational learning, an important factor of self-efficacy,

setting goals. This result is in a similar vein with Tham (2021) and Mahendra (2021) respectively who found that learners have a positive attitude toward setting goals, but they need support in setting objectives and selecting suitable needs.

Regarding designing or developing learning materials sub-aspects, results show that GFP learners' self-efficacy in choosing the suitable materials of a lesson that they are going to teach from the Internet is higher than their self-efficacy of choosing materials that are relevant to their lesson and preparing the materials and resources that they need to teach their classmates by themselves respectively. This result suggests that GFP learners are dependent. They are unable to reflect, think and act. This result again implies the importance of the cooperation between teachers and students in the setting of autonomous learning. This result is in the line with Tham (2021) who found that learners have positive attitudes towards choosing learning materials.

In contrast, the analysis of delivering sup-aspects shows that GFP learners' self-efficacy in working in a group to achieve a goal is higher than their self-efficacy of running activities of a lesson smoothly with their classmates, asking questions in English, dividing the time of a class on the prime a lesson's objectives, presenting a presentation to their classmates in English, getting their classmates to follow the rules of the classroom, or controlling their classmates' disruptive behaviors. This result suggests that Omani learners have the motivation and regulation to interact with the environment and learn. This could imply that they prefer enactive learning, learning by doing. This result further implies that they have self-regulation, the agency that people tend to have to do tasks. This result is in a similar vein with Alkhoudary (2015) and Saeed (2021) who found that Omani students have the motivation and self-determination in the environment of autonomous learning.

As for monitoring sup-aspects, results show that GFP learners' self-efficacy in taking the right decision of a problem is higher than their self-efficacy of deciding whether their classmates understand what has been explained or not, giving alternative explanations if their classmates feel confused, giving feedback on their classmates' answers, or deciding their classmates' strengths and weaknesses after answering a task respectively. This result could imply that Omani learners could have self-judgment, an important factor of a person's self-regulation. They may have the ability to reflect and theorize the solutions to problems. However, they do not have the ability to test their theories. This result is in the line with Marantika (2021) who found that learners tend to make their decisions.

Regarding learning evaluation sup-aspects, results show that GFP learners' self-efficacy in finding a better way of teaching a lesson again in the future is higher than their self-efficacy of testing a new way of teaching a lesson to see whether it is good or not, using a variety of assessment strategies to make sure whether their classmates understand what they have explained, or evaluating a lesson that has been explained to their classmates identifying its strengths and weaknesses. This result shows that Omani learners do not have metacognitive knowledge, the knowledge which includes how to think critically, manage a process of learning and reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of the learning process. This result suggests that GFP learners do not know how to reflect on their experiences correctly. They could theorize theories but not test them. This result is against Tham (2021) who find that learners have a positive attitude toward writing reflections. That could be because each context has its own way of learning.

Notwithstanding this research sheds the light on the self-efficacy of Omani GFP learners on the aspects and sub-aspects of autonomous learning, it was good if it finds in-depth why Omani learners can set their goals in the personal domain, not the academic one. In addition, it was good if the present research finds why Omani learners are not able to test their theories although they have the motivation to interact with the environment and they have the self-efficacy of taking the right decisions.

The current research recommends all curriculum designers and teachers locally or globally to activate students' practice of setting goals, realizing goals of a course, and reflecting on learning experiences. Practicing reflective practice will activate experimental learning. It will help students to set goals and objectives, set plans to achieve them, apply the plans, evaluate the results, theorize theories to improve the results and test them. Therefore, the autonomous learning aspect and sub-aspects of students will be enhanced.

6. Conclusion

The current quantitative research aims to answer two questions: what is the University of Buraimi GFP learners' self-efficacy of the autonomous learning aspects? and what is the University of Buraimi GFP learners' self-efficacy of the autonomous learning sub-aspects? Results showed that Omani GFP learners' self-efficacy in delivering is higher than their self-efficacy in identifying learning goals, monitoring, evaluating, and developing learning materials and resources respectively. Results further showed that GFP learners' self-efficacy is high in some sup-aspects of autonomous learning such as setting goals of what they want to learn and the skills that they need to learn, but not how to apply them, choosing the suitable materials of a lesson from the Internet, but not to design them, working in a group to achieve a goal, but not to organize the process of learning, taking the right decision of a problem, but not test the decision to enhance the situation. This research is significant as there is not a research study in literature, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, which investigates learners' self-efficacy of autonomous learning. It will help even partially curricula designers and teachers in Oman or around the world to know the aspects of autonomous learning that learners struggle with.

Although the research attempts to shed the light on the Omani GFP learners' self-efficacy aspects of autonomous learning, research findings cannot be generalized. Being in a small number of participants (110 participants), the research results cannot be generalized for all contexts. Additionally, not having a mixed-method research design, the research has a limitation. Conducting an interview, for instance, could enable the researcher to gain more new information that would clarify the current research problem. In terms of avenues for further research, future researchers could replicate the study in other contexts and with other academic levels.

List of Abbreviation

N	Abbreviation	Meaning
1.	E.g.	For example
2.	EFL	English as a Foreign Language
3.	GFP	General Foundation Program
4.	N	Number
5.	SCT	Social Cognitive Theory
6.	SD	Standard Deviation
7.	SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Science
8.	St	First
9.	T	Total

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Appendix

A Questionnaire of Learners' Self-efficacy of the Autonomous Learning

Dear students,

This is a questionnaire which aims to investigate your self-efficacy beliefs of the autonomous learning. It includes two sections. Please, read the items carefully and choose whether not at all, maybe a little, moderately, a lot to some extent, or a lot of each item. The questionnaire will not take more than 7minutes of your time. The data which will be collected will be confidential. They will not be used only for the research purposes. Your cooperation is highly appreciated.

The researcher

Section One: Demographic Information

Name (optional):   nationality:

Gender: level:

Section Two: Learners' Self-efficacy Beliefs of the Autonomous Learning

	Identifying learning goals and needs	**Not at all**	**Maybe a little**	**Moderately**	**A lot to some extent**	**A lot**
1	I can identify what I need to learn.	1	2	3	4	**5**
2	I can identify the skills that I need to learn.	1	2	3	4	**5**
3	I can set goals of what I want to learn.	1	2	3	4	**5**
4	I can divide the goals into small objectives.	1	2	3	4	**5**
5	I can set goals of a course that I am studying.	1	2	3	4	**5**
6	I can set a plan to achieve the goals of the course that I am studying.	1	2	3	4	**5**
	Designing or developing learning materials and resources	**Not at all**	**Maybe a little**	**Moderately**	**A lot to some extent**	**A lot**
1	I can prepare the materials and resources (e.g., PowerPoint presentations, pictures, worksheets, or video clips) that I need to teach my classmates by myself.	1	2	3	4	**5**
2	I can choose the suitable materials of the lesson that I am going to teach from the Internet.	1	2	3	4	**5**
3	I can choose the materials that are relevant to my lesson.	1	2	3	4	**5**
	Learning Delivering	**Not at all**	**Maybe a little**	**Moderately**	**A lot to some extent**	**A lot**
1	I can present a presentation to my classmates in English.	1	2	3	4	**5**
2	I can work in a group to achieve an objective.	1	2	3	4	**5**
3	I can run the activities of the lesson that I am going to teach with my classmates smoothly.	1	2	3	4	**5**

4	I can get my classmates to follow the rules of the classroom.	1	2	3	4	**5**
5	I can control my classmates' disruptive behaviors.	1	2	3	4	**5**
6	I can divide the time of the class on the prime a lesson's objectives.	1	2	3	4	**5**
7	I can ask others questions in English.	1	2	3	4	**5**
	Monitoring	**Not at all**	**Maybe a little**	**Moderately**	**A lot to some extent**	**A lot**
1	I can give alternative explanations if my classmates feel confused.	1	2	3	4	**5**
2	I can decide whether my classmates understand what I have explained or not.	1	2	3	4	**5**
3	I can decide my classmates' strengths and weaknesses after answering a task.	1	2	3	4	**5**
4	I can give feedback on my classmates' answers.	1	2	3	4	**5**
5	I can take the right decision of a problem.	1	2	3	4	**5**
	Evaluation	**Not at all**	**Maybe a little**	**Moderately**	**A lot to some extent**	**A lot**
1	I can use a variety of assessment strategies (e.g., quizzes, games, or discussions) to make sure whether my classmates understand what I have explained or not.	1	2	3	4	**5**
2	I can evaluate the lesson that I have explained to my classmates identifying its strengths and weaknesses.	1	2	3	4	**5**
3	I can find a better way of teaching my lesson if I am going to teach it again for my classmates in the future.	1	2	3	4	**5**
4	I can test the new way of teaching a lesson to see whether it is good or not.	1	2	3	4	**5**